596 might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget
611 children for his family. Nambudiri spinsters,
582 of whom there were many, remained in their natal houses and were maintained by their kinsmen. The eldest son of a Nambudiri family
[595] might however have several Nambudiri wives and also several Nayar concubines. Nambudiri younger sons lived and ate in their natal households, headship of which passed from the eldest son down the line of his brothers and then dropped to the eldest son in the filial generation. In this way the Nambudiri family was prevented from splitting into segments, and was enabled to maintain its position on the ancestral estate over
[597] many generations. If in any generation a family had no son, succession was ensured by the adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man of a family related in the cognatic line.

613 In the royal lineages, since each lineage,
582 though exogamous, regarded itself as a separate
837 caste and admitted no peers, sexual unions were entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad, royal women had liaisons only with [373] Nambudiris of the highest and wealthiest subcastes within the kingdom; royal men, with women of chiefly, village headmen or retainer Nayar lineages. In the Calicut lineage, which came to power later and took time to establish its ritual rank, royal women till the 18th century had liaisons either with Nambudiri men or with men of the ancient royal lineages of tributary kingdoms, who though through conquest were subordinate to the upstart Zamorins, were still regarded by them as of higher ritual rank. Later

613 when they had established themselves as of high
582 ritual rank, and when some of their vassal lin-
837 eages had died out, the Zamorins too looked only to Nambudiri for genitors. Royal men similarly had liaisons with women of the lower matrilineal subcastes, as in the Cochin and Walluvanad kingdoms.

582 Among temples servants, retainer-Nayars
837 and middle class Nayars, the majority of unions took place between individuals of the same subcaste. A small proportion of retainer and middle class Nayar women had liaisons with Nambudiris of the lower subcastes, Embrandiri Brahman priests (who followed the same descent system as Nambudiris) or with royal, chiefly, village headmen or temple servant men. In the Nayar village headmen's lineages, a larger proportion of women had liaisons with men of the chiefly or royal lineages, or with Nambudiris; and in the chiefs' lineages, with royal or Nambudiri men, though in these subcastes too, individuals of the same subcaste but different lineages might have unions with each other. Similarly, a small [38] proportion of men in each Nayar subcaste, down to re tainers, had liaisons with Nayar women of a lower subcaste, down to the rank of middle class Nayars. Chart I shows the mutual ritual ranking and the direction of hypergamous unions between the higher castes of the kingdom. In the temple servant castes, whose occupational allegiance was exclusively with Nambudiris, women had liaisons either with Nambudiris or with men of their own caste. There was no intermarriage either way between temple

582 servant castes or between temple servants on
837 the one hand and royalty, chiefs or village headmen, who belonged to separate hierarchies.

582 Hypergamous unions, even more than other
613 unions between Nayars of the same subcaste,
837 emphasized the exclusively sexual role of the lovers and genitors of a Nayar lineage. In most circumstances a higher caste lover lived and ate in his natal household and was maintained by it; he visited his mistress after supper and left before breakfast, after which he took a purifying bath before re-entering his natal house. He might not eat in his mistress's household, and following the morning bath might not touch her or his children. The only exception to these
[44] residential rules arose in the case of Nambudiris who had liaisons with royal women. These were received as temporary occupants of the palace and housed in separate buildings at the expense of the royal lineage, at some distance from the buildings occupied by the princes and the royal women. Like all other Nambudiri genitors of Nayar children, however, they [39] visited their mistresses at night and in the daytime carried out their ritual duties in private, attended by their own Nambudiri cooks and serving men.

613 It is clear however that hypergamous liaisons,
837 though of an almost exclusively sexual nature,
571 knit together the several castes concerned with the secular administration and with the religious law and public rituals of the state. Though not recognized by them as kinsmen, elderly members of aristocratic Nayar and temple servant

613 lineages still take pride in the fact that for cen-
937 turies, their lineages have been partly fathered
571 by men of the higher castes of royalty, chiefs, and (particularly) priests. The allegiance of Nayar soldiers to their headmen, of headmen to their chiefs, and of chiefs to the king, was undoubtedly strengthened by this network of sexual ties, as was the unity of the secular and religious hierarchies, which might otherwise have been opposed.

613 IV The Traditional Lineage System of the Nayars

(1) Structure and Functions

[621] In each traditional village, four to six "military" Nayar lineages of one subcaste was present as retainers of the janmi. The retainer lineage commonly had a depth of nine to twelve generations and usually comprised between 12 to 100 members. It was called a taravad, derived from tara, the word for the raised foundation on which a house is built. Taravad can mean both the members of a lineage, living and dead, and the ancestral house from which they sprang: it corresponds to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and place. The members of a taravad are a group, usually of actual and not merely putative matrilineal kin, descended from a common ancestress (whose name may or may not be known), but they describe themselves as a group whose matrilineal forbears once lived in one house. That their lineage should be associated with the house befits the sedentary economy of the Nayars and the importance of their ancestral land. Powerful

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

613 Again if a Nayar of any rank committed treason
687 against the king, the king might order the execution of all members of his property group. Their land escheated to the royal lineage, but apparently no reprisals were made upon the lineage as a whole.

613 In spite of these laws of the kingdom a tradition did persist that
627 the lineage of an offended Nayar had the moral obligation to avenge him (Logan, 1951, I: 169). Folk songs tell of blood feuds (*kudi-paga*) between lineages which apparently neither king nor chief could always quell, although the blood-feud tradition is not nearly so important as in North Malabar, where political centralization had advanced less far. In the central kingdoms feuds between commoner lineages and between village headmen's lineages could be most easily cut short by the higher authorities. Feuds between district chiefs' lineages were harder to quell and sometimes turned into small wars between districts, in which each chief amassed his feudal following behind him (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: 9). However, even in the twentieth
[178] century under the British legal system, protracted estrangements have sometimes existed between two retainer lineages of the same neighborhood, which would periodically break out in armed assaults between representative individuals or even, occasionally, in murder. In recent years inter-lineage conflicts concerning assault and libel have also often been waged in the urban law courts.

Three institutions existed through which kings and chiefs seem to have tried to handle and curtail inter-lineage aggression. During wartime the problem was presumably less acute because the soldiers were away from their villages fighting large battles under their feudal lords. But wars took place only in the dry season; in the monsoons extensive military operations were impossible. Instead, each wet season saw a period of intensive military training in village gymnasia. Intermittently in this season, champions of lineages, of villages, and of chiefdoms went to joust at chiefly and royal palaces for the entertainment of their lords. Thus, first, these occasions may have helped to canalize intersegmentary conflict in a manner conducive to the royal peace.

Second, if a Nayar assaulted another or insulted his lineage, the offended man might challenge him to a duel. On payment of a fee to the chief, each disputant brought one or several champions from his lineage to fight on his behalf. Each pair fought until one or both was wounded or killed. A duel might be postponed as long as twelve years until the two lineages had trained champions to their satisfaction
613 (Logan, 1951, I: 170). Often it was not fought by the original dis-
627 putants. Duels seem to have been fought mainly to avenge the honor
835
839

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

of matrilineal kinswomen against accusations of incest with a lineage kinsman or of adultery with a low-caste man. Interestingly, these two forms of slander still occasion the bitterest inter-lineage disputes in modern villages.

Third, if a Nayar murdered another of the same rank, his lineage kin had the customary right to carry the corpse into the courtyard of the murderer's property group and burn corpse and house together. The royal and chiefly powers seem to have sanctioned this act as a form of private vengeance while reserving for themselves the right of trial and execution of the murderer.

In the law of the kingdom, therefore, the lineage was not recognized as a unit having legal responsibility for its members' acts. The state vested it with no property and no internal structure of authority. Its members were not required to accept responsibility for one another's crimes and civil offenses nor were they accorded the right of unrestricted vengeance. They were merely *permitted* (probably as a concession to more ancient custom) to support one another in certain restricted situations, provided they acknowledged the superior authority of the kingdom's judicial agents.

I have written of lineages as groups of true matrilineal kin, and so they often were. However, some procedure seems to have been found necessary to adjust the lineage system to the territorial organization. We saw that segments might hive off to other neighborhoods; this must have become more common as sales of landlord and tenant rights increased during the period of European trade. My informants in one Cochin village told me that traditionally, when a lineage segment moved to a new village, its members were adopted as retainers and tenants by the local landlord. They were accepted into the assembly of their new neighborhood and permitted to perform their first tāli rite jointly with some established lineage. Presumably they also took over the enangar of this lineage. In any case my informants thought it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the chief or, in areas of temple management, of a Brahman legal authority called a Vaidigan, to obtain new enangar ties within a neighborhood. The joint performance of the tāli rite set up a bond of fictitious matrilineal kinship between the old lineage and the incoming segment so that their members had thenceforth to observe exogamy.

This procedure served to provide newcomers with ceremonial and marriage partners and to induct them into the microcosmic political life of the neighborhood. The new members, however, were apparently never completely accepted as "true" matrilineal kin. Thus death and

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

If he wished, a girl's ritual bridegroom might later visit her as one of a series of husbands, but he had no prior claims and was not obliged to do so. The woman in turn owed no obligations to him except that at his death, she and all her children by whatever biological fathers must observe fifteen days of ritual pollution for him. Ritual pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin. Until modern times it was not observed by a woman and her children for a visiting husband who was not also the woman's ritual husband. In addition, if they knew him, a woman's children called her ritual husband by the Dravidian word *appan*, the term used for the father in the patrilineal castes. Their mother's visiting husbands they called by the Sanskrit term *acchan;* this word means "leader" or "lord" and was also sometimes applied as a title to village headmen and military leaders.

After the tāli rite and shortly before or after puberty, a woman might enter into a number of sexual relationships with men of her local caste group or of an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar might visit a number of wives of his own or an appropriate lower Nayar caste. Among retainer Nayars, by far the majority of unions were between persons of the same caste. A very few favored women had husbands from the lineages of temple servants, village headmen, chiefs, or royalty, or from houses of Nambudiri Brahmans of relatively low rank. A smaller number of Nayar retainers had wives in the lower-ranking castes of Nayar temple menials, but not in the servant castes of Nayar washermen and barbers, which were endogamous.

It is not certain how many husbands a woman might have at one time; various writers [8] of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries mention between three and twelve (Logan, 1951, I: 136–137). Others add that women "never refused themselves" to occasional Brahman or Nayar visitors of appropriate rank. It seems probable that each woman had a small number of husbands from her local caste group who, while their relationship lasted, visited her regularly, but that women also received occasional fleeting visits from itinerant Nayars of appropriate rank, perhaps mainly during military operations.

[8] See, for example, Abdu 'r Razzak (1441), Nicolo di Conti (1444), Hieronimo de Santo Stephano (1563), and Cesar Fredericke (1563), in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 22, 1857; Duarte Barbosa (1518) and Joao de Barros (early sixteenth century) in Dames, 1921, II: 124, 241; Ludovico di Varthema (1503–1508), tr. J. W. Jones, 1863; 146; Zein-ud-Deen (1579), tr. Rowlandson, 1833: 63; J. H. van Linschoten (1596) in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 71: 279; Pietro della Valle (1624), Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 85: 579; Hamilton (1727), ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 310; Buchanan, 1807, II: 411.

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

843 595 431 paternity. This they did by making gifts to the woman herself and to the midwife immediately after the birth. Any man who had visited the woman in the appropriate time period was required to make these gifts. If a man refused, he could be called upon by the caste assembly to fulfill his obligation. The gifts comprised two new lower cloths for the mother and one cloth and a quantity of paddy as payment to the Nayar woman barber who attended at the de-
843 595 431 684 livery. Again, these gifts were clearly legal and ceremonial tokens rather than objects of substantial economic value. Legally, however, their transfer was of the utmost significance. For if no man would consent to make the delivery payments, the woman was assumed to have had sex relations with a man of lower caste or with a Muslim or a Christian. Her caste assembly would temporarily excommunicate her taravād until she and her child had been driven out by their kāranavan and the woman's funeral rites had been performed. The woman, presumably with her child, might be executed by her matrilineal kinsmen or allowed to become a slave of the district chief or the king. If the woman and her lover were publicly exposed even before the birth of the child, both might be put to death.

595 593 564 A woman had no obligations to her husbands other than the granting of sexual privileges. Nayar husbands of the woman's own caste occasionally dined in her household but this was a favor and not a right. Nayar households sometimes provided uncooked food and a separate building for Brahman or chiefly husbands, but this again seems to have been a matter of courtesy rather than of obligation. [431] Husbands of higher caste made the same gifts to their wives as did Nayar husbands.

595 584 586 613 In the nineteenth century her kāranavan selected a woman's first husband, and he may have done so at earlier periods. Until the 1930's many kāranavans also retained the right to dismiss a husband who displeased them. It seems improbable, however, that a woman or her kāranavan would ever refuse the visits of a Brahman, chief, or village headman of powerful standing in the community. In some [839] cases also a husband of higher caste seems to have monopolized the [564] favors of a Nayar woman, a privilege not accorded to men of her own caste. K. Kannan Nair reported (1908: 186) that until a century previously local chiefs sometimes compelled a woman to receive as husbands those of her enangar who wished to marry her. In general, however, women seem to have been free to reject particular men, and both men and women to terminate liaisons without formality.

000 In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

obligations, some fathers, especially kāranavans, kept their children residing with them for most of their lives and gave them property. A child owed his father obedience and respect. If a man divorced his wife her children also left him and might see little of him thereafter. However, they had to observe ritual pollution at his death and his eldest son took part in his funeral rites along with the chief matrilineal heir. The eldest son also made annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. In general the relationship with the father was thought of as intimate and loving. Children must respect him and a daughter must not touch him after her puberty. But having no legal authority, the father was not feared. His role was sharply contrasted with that of the mother's brother. Uncles were said to teach by scolding and punishment; fathers, by persuasion and laughter.

The father's kin had privileges and obligations at life-crisis rites—most of which took place in the individual's taravād house—and were feasted and made gifts at the ceremonies of first pregnancy, naming, first rice feeding, tāli tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. At the naming ceremony, when a baby was one month old, the father's mother chose the name, the father's father conferred it, and the father presented the child with a gold waistband. The kāranavan fulfilled these roles in Central Kerala.

A person was forbidden to marry his father's sibling or paternal parallel cousin of the father's property group. Affectionate respect was the proper attitude toward all the father's older kin. The paternal grandmother played with a child but did not idolize him as she did her daughter's child, for he was not of her taravād. Unless he was also a child's kāranavan, the paternal grandfather was a distant kinsman who had little to do with his grandchild. The mother's father, on the other hand, usually doted on his grandchild and was a cherished companion.

Male cross cousins had a joking relationship and were often close companions. Their relationship might be tinged with hostility concerning the property of their respective father and mother's brother. Sometimes, at least in the nineteenth century, they quarreled openly over the inheritance and became enemies thereafter. Male and female cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges if the girl was younger than the man. A boy who returned to his taravād at puberty often married his matrilateral cross cousin thereafter. Even if she married someone else he might sleep with her illicitly before or after the marriage. Elders were either ignorant or

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

605 836 837 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take vengeance.

AFFINES

602 576 184 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized obligations.

602 592 613 [593] During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In such households there was a certain authority structure between the wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house, go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

In strict avunculocal residence the kāranavan's wife had domestic authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as [598] a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman [607] returned to her home in this way, the kāranavan would try to move his [604] wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good grace.

602 613 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibitions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and [604] uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

582
*[544] endogamous Attikkurissi clan of the Nâyars, who look upon it as the most fitting union.

MARRIAGE.

58 "The haughty nobles and the vulgar race
Never must join the conjugal embrace."
The Lusiad.

[656] The common assertion that there is no such thing as marriage amongst the Nâyars, so easily accepted in belief that the Government has been persuaded into a commission to examine the question and to pass an edict entitled "The Malabar Marriage Bill" (which happily fell dead, and is extremely unlikely to effect the customs of the Nâyars and others following the Marumakkattâyam law of inheritance), reminds one of the weary disquisition by people who are dull enough to try and prove that Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another fellow of the same name. No events of life being so realistic to man as marriage and death (to the individual, to the tribe, to the people) shallowness rather than sturdy hardihood of racial character is perhaps indicated when we find any downright change in the ceremonial of marriage, even though it be but some ephemeral divagation and not properly speaking radical change.

175 Buchanan, writing in 1800, tells us that Nâyar girls
585 are married before 10, so that they may not be deflowered
[582] by nature, but the husband never afterwards cohabits with his wife. It would not be decent. He allows her this and that, and she lives in her mother's house where
[837] she may admit a lover of her own or of a higher caste; the lover giving her a small present; never a large one, which would indicate that she was influenced by mercenary motives. He says the young people vie with each
837 other for favour of the other sex, but that, should a Nâyar
175 man have intimacy with a Tîyan (a lower caste) woman,
564 he is put to death and the woman is sold to the Mâppilas! In the case of the *chère amie* being a slave—presumably of the Cheruman or cognate tribes—both are put to death.
[626] If this be true, there were forcible means used in those days for preventing intermixture of the people of the higher and lower castes. Buchanan tells us also that in North Malabar, where as a rule the lady lives in his home, the Nâyar or Nambûtiri lover may put her to death, should she be guilty of infidelity; and he may send her home whenever he pleases.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

custom is one which makes for improvement of the race, bound up as it is with the Marumakkattâyam system, which, guided by the anulômam principle, has fewer hindrances in the way of natural selection than perhaps any other marital custom throughout the world.

The divine commands of Srí Parasu Râma, the imputed originator of the Marumakkattâyam system which is followed by 70 per cent. of the people of Malabar, are supposed to be contained in the Kêrala Mâhâtmyam, a work in Sanskrit verse, written on the ordinary Malabar grantham (palm-leaf book). It purports to be a monologue "addressed by the Rishi Garga to Yudhishthira the eldest of the Pândus." Chapter XLIX relates "how certain celestial damsels were brought from Indra's world by Parasu Râma to satisfy the sexual cravings of the Kêralam Brâhmans, and it relates how Parasu Râma at Vishabhadri (Trichûr), pronounced his commandment to the women (not being of the Brâhman caste) to satisfy the desires of Brâhmans, enjoining on them to put off chastity and the cloth which covered their breasts, and declaring that promiscuous intercourse with three or four men in common was void of the least taint of sin." Unfortunately no scholar has given his opinion as to the time when this was written. Most likely it is not very ancient, and may be attributed to device of the Nambûtiris. But it is respected as authoritative. "One of the foremost Nambûtiris in Malabar in respect of wealth, rank, sanctity and learning," in common with the rest of his clan, relied absolutely on it, and informed the Commission: "The Smiriti says the Sûdras' appointed path to heaven is serving the Brâhmans." "The practice of Brâhmans . . . . . having sexual intercourse with servile (Sûdra) women is in accordance with the Sástras." "If a Brâhman wished to have sexual intercourse with a Sûdra's wife, the Sûdra would be bound to gratify the wish." "A Sûdra cannot be sure of the true parentage of the children born of his wife. Hence the Sûdras cannot follow Makkattâyam"—inheritance in the male line. The Zamorin Maharajah Bahadur informed the Commission that "according to Parasu Râma . . . . chastity should not be observed by non-Brâhman females." Again, the "Ettan Tamburan," one of the senior members of the Zamorin's family, a learned Sanscrit scholar said: "It has been ordained by Parasu Râma that in Kêrala, Marumakkatâyam women need not be chaste;" and he quoted a sloka in proof that there

564 should be no such thing as chastity excepting amongst
837 the Brâhman women. And the Kolatûr Vâriyâr, a great personage: "A woman is not forbidden from consorting with more than one man. For the Marumakkatâyam people, who reckon their descent in the female line, there is no objection to any cohabitation which does not contaminate the female element."

581 The opinions which have been quoted are those of persons of the highest position, principals of the oldest families, and give expression to the old-fashioned Malabar custom which they would be the last to condemn. But it must not be imagined that the goddess Lubricity reigns supreme in Malabar. It seems perhaps to have been indicated that she does. Such is, however, not the case. It has been said by one whose long acquaintance with Malabar gives him what we may call admitted right to express authoritative opinion, that, "nowhere else is the marriage tie more jealously guarded, and its breaches more savagely avenged." We shall know more of the subject presently, when we have done with all that pertains to formal union between the sexes. As a matter of fact lubricity has no more followers in Malabar than elsewhere.

585 The ceremonies surrounding marriage and death seem
764 to be those in which human feelings are deepest, and
182 consequently in these, more than in any others, we see relics of a long gone past; much of the ceremonial being now apparently meaningless, and handed on after the manner of all ceremonial, for no obvious purpose, long after the original signification has been forgotten. Amongst all races of the world it is the same. These form perhaps—for the ceremonies connected with death are interwoven with primitive religious ideas—the closest links between our earlier ancestors and ourselves. The institution marriage itself is not easily liable to change or even modification, and thus it is, perhaps, that it, the product of a byegone age, is not always suited to the wants of the age in which it is found. It is rarely up to date. It is invariably blended with superstitions and restraints which people believe they believe; and the relations between the sexes are rarely natural, *i.e.*, rarely free from restraints which are souvenirs of the past, and which are resented in the present. Of course amongst primitive peoples changes in respect of marital connexions, as also in respect of death ceremonies, are imperceptible. They must be very small indeed in even an immense period; and in their case there is not that

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayars

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I would have liked to have returned to this household and to have got more information about its inmates; I would also have found it useful to discover other Nayar homes in which the traces of polyandry were still as fresh as in this one. Alas, war broke out within a few days and I was inexorably drawn away as related in Appendix I.

I had to wait more than ten years before I again visited a Nayar household reputed to be polyandrous. It was in Palappuram, in the Walluvanad taluk, on the 23rd of November 1949, where I went to a house called Valathandath. Its inhabitants belonged to the Sudra Nayar sub-caste, and the *karanavan* whom I met, an old man, bore the name of Shekaranayar. His sister, Chimdevi, also aged, lived with him, she sat in a corner of one of the rooms, her breasts bare in the old fashioned way. She had been polyandrous too, I heard, although I was unable to discover the number and names of the husbands that she had had. Offspring consisted of two daughters and a son, the three of them living in the family house.

The eldest daughter, called Parbhatiama, had a little girl, Shandakumari. When I asked who the father was, she smiled and said that she did not know. Immediately intrigued, I asked again and why. The answer, which was not too difficult to obtain, was that she had two husbands, one "with the military" in Madras, and the other a Nayar agriculturist. Which of the two was the father, my interpreters said they could not find out for nobody knew. I was struck by the fact that this Nayar woman had a soldier as one of her husbands; it was reminiscent of the ancient classical pattern in which polyandry in her caste was reputed to exist because of the military commitments of the men.

The younger daughter, Kunyimaluama, posed for a photograph with her brother, Krishnayar (Fig. 8); she was also accompanied by a young man called Balanayar of the Velathadeth *tarawad*, who was, I heard, her paramour but not her husband. [837]

595* 114

In view of the really determined opposition of the Nayar community in Kerala towards allowing me to find out more about their marital customs, I abstained from making further enquiries into the subject. Consequently I was forced to content myself with the meagre results obtained, and, apart from the information gathered from the Musad and mentioned above (see p. 174), I steered clear of the Nayars. To have acted otherwise under the circumstances might well have compromised my entire research work in Kerala and have led, I am afraid, to my having to abandon it without gaining any further data, even concerning the other polyandrous castes and sub-castes.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

association. That was why Shankara and they themselves later had sought and obtained wives of their own; mainly because the women "did not look after them", "did not satisfy them sexually". In principle, a common wife should not refuse herself to any one of her husbands, Panju said, but as in all things, excuses and evasions were easy to find, and the result was that the arrangement did not always work out satisfactorily for some. Nowadays, women had becomes most immoral, the informant complained; they were not at all chaste and had numerous extra-marital relations, in defiance of what was expected of them in the homes into which they had been married.

From here we were led to discuss jealousy. Did it exist among them? And if it did, how did they control it to make polyandry function? I was assured, of course, that it existed; had I not noticed how many polyandrous households were breaking up because of quarrelling? Their members quarrelled because there was rivalry among the men, jealousy of each other and a desire to be the sole possessor of the common wife. Panju agreed that, although there was no jealousy between himself and Narayana, both of them being liked equally by Nani who distributed her favours evenly to both of them, there had been much strife and unpleasantness in the days when they were married to Kuniyama with their elder brothers (they were too young for that in their first union with Devaki). That was why they had wanted a wife to themselves and obtained Nani from their maternal uncle. They got on with each other and liked working together, hence there was no jealousy between them and their polyandrous marriage functioned well.

Thandans are, as we have seen, *makkathayam*, and because of this the status of the children is perfectly clear: they are legally the offspring of their fathers and take their family name while inheriting the property from them at their death. They are also, of course, their mother's legal sons and daughters, but they do not carry on her lineage nor inherit from her brother as they would do, for instance, in a north Malabar Tiya *marumakkathayam* union.

With regard to paternity, the children belong to all the fathers collectively, and not to any particular one of them. They are never assigned to the elder father, as is sometimes the case with polyandrous peoples in other parts of the world. I asked both Panju and Nani if they knew who was the father of their different sons, and both of them told me that they "did not care" and that they had "no preference". I insisted that they could perhaps try to remember what had happened and who was the woman's partner at the probable date of conception, to calcu-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

This no doubt acted as a strong incentive for women not to create a situation which might lead to such unpleasantness, and contributed greatly in forcing the wife to conform to the rules of polyandry in what concerned her. 595*

Were there any illegitimate children in the Thandan community, and what was their fate if there were? I was assured that they would be considered bastards and outcast. It was also said that the man responsible for them might be forced to support them on complaint of the woman to the Collector. This was the only information that I was able to elicit concerning such cases, Panju declining any knowledge of them. The interpreter made it clear, however, that he was only thinking of the case of an unmarried mother. Should she have a child in wedlock from someone other than her husbands, it would be very difficult to prove adultery and the child would certainly be considered legitimate and that of the husbands. It was up to them to decide what they would do with their unfaithful spouse, should they be able to prove her misconduct. Actually, there were no illegitimate children to speak of in the area, my interpreter assured me. An unmarried girl expecting a child would most certainly find a young man or young men to take her to wife, and apart from gossip, nothing serious would come of it. He knew of a few cases like this, he told me, but he preferred not to give me further details, nor let me see them. He had mentioned a woman who had complained to the authorities in such a case, since this had actually happened recently. It was, however, a modern development which did not conform to the traditional patterns of Kerala Thandan culture. 848 [851] [837]

I enquired also about prostitution, and was told that this did exist to some extent in the Thandan caste and in other, higher castes. The last war, with its influx of soldiers from outside, was held responsible for this state of affairs, but also the presence of European planters and administrators. There was little venereal disease, although the authority upon which I was told this was not definitive. It did not seem to me very convincing, coming as it did just after the statement concerning the causes of prostitution in the State. 548 164

Birth control was not practised since it was contrary to Hindu religious convictions. Abortions were rare, and it could be seen that the population was increasing steadily and unchecked. There was no female infanticide, and both my informant and my interpreter seemed surprised that I should ask if there were. Women were highly valued in Kerala, they said, and there was no reason not to want them. 842 849 [562]

Feeling that I would obtain more detailed information concerning the 600

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

427 Munsifs and District Judges with summary jurisdiction in the matter." The provisions in the regulation apply only to "Kanam
423 tenants who, by themselves or through their predecessors in interest, have uninterruptedly held the holding for a period of not less than thirty years prior to the coming into force of this Regulation," and provide some restrictions on the part of the landlord in matters of renewal of kanam holdings, and ejection of kanam tenants; and dispense altogether with the right of *Melkanam*. The Puravaka janmis in Watakancheri number 54, of whom a few are Nambudri Brahmans, the others being of various castes. The Nambudris are the big landlords.

423 These janmis also are in some cases the custodians of "devaswoms" (literally "wealth of the gods"), lands belonging to the local temples; these are treated by them just like their janmam lands, but they keep separate accounts for the same. The Sirkar also manages devaswom lands and there is a department in the State which manages the affairs of the temples and the property belonging to them.

Of the total number of landowners (about 150), only 34 with an area of 194·44 acres cultivate their own lands. The rest sublet.

Of the non-cultivating landowners a few are big janmis like the Nambudri Brahmans and the Paliath Atchan. The Nambudri Brahmans pursue no occupation but that of living in strict conformity with the duties of a Brahman. They study the Vedas and live a pious and cleanly life. Western civilization and ideas have not
[428] penetrated to them. They maintain the joint-property system in which the whole property descends to the eldest male member.
[837] Only the eldest male is allowed to enter into legal marriage, but he can marry two or three women; the rest keep Nayar females as their mistresses.*

The "Paliath Atchan" possesses much land in the State. The head of the family lives in a place near Cranganore. He manages his estates through departments and officials like the Sirkar. He is the biggest landlord in the State, and a powerful hereditary chief.

The small landowners who do not cultivate their lands pursue occupations like retail trade, Government service, law, etc. These generally sublet their lands to tenants who own no lands and try to exact from these latter as much rent as possible. There are also agricultural workers who neither own nor rent land; the caste of "Cherumas" belongs to this class. Also a few of the low
[465] castes, the Mappilas and in some cases the Christians,—male and female—engage themselves in such work. They are low paid. Formerly these wages were in kind, but money wages have begun to prevail; but for harvesting work wages are invariably paid in kind, the worker receiving one para of paddy for every six gathered in.

The rents of paddy lands are paid in kind.

243 *Agriculture.*—Paddy is grown on all the wet lands. Out of the seasons, the cultivators also grow to a small extent such grains as gram and peas in the paddy lands. Area under paddy—653·24 acres.

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* [This phrase must not be understood to mean that such Nayar women are maintained in any way by their Nambudri paramours. They depend on their own family property, which descends in the female line. The children of Nambudri Brahmans and Nayar women are reckoned Nayars, and are members of the joint family of the mother, and entitled to maintenance from that family property.—Ed.]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

582 837 *Marriage customs.*—The custom of marriage before puberty is prevalent among Hindus, excepting Nambudris and Nayars. The Nambudris or Malabar Brahmans can give their daughters in marriage at any time they like or not marry them at all. Only the eldest male member of a Nambudri family can marry in his own caste. All the other sons keep Nayar women as mistresses. The eldest member can marry more than one wife, but many women of necessity have to remain unmarried.

[428] [586] The case of Nayars is entirely different. They follow a different system of inheritance, i.e., descent through the female. The result of this system is that the female is at full liberty to choose or to divorce husbands as she likes. The man also has the same liberty. As a consequence of the different systems of inheritance their marriage custom is also different. Before puberty some person closely connected with the family ties the sacred string round the neck of the girl. This custom is purely formal and does not make them husband and wife. Nowadays this formal business is done by the mother of the girl at the temple in the presence of God. After puberty the man who really wants to marry the girl (he must be of the same caste or some one belonging to a higher caste, preferably a Nambudri) comes, and performs the real marriage. This real marriage is binding only so long as he and she will. Divorce can be had at any time by a mere word. The woman can marry again. The death of the man does not make [585] the woman a widow. There is no widowhood for Nayar woman. In fact there is no marriage among the Nayars. What actually happens is that somebody comes and lives with a woman for a time, then leaves, and both live with others. The only restriction is that two men cannot live with one woman at the same time, but one man can cohabit with any number of women at the same time. The children [428] born of such unions inherit the property of the uncle since the descent is by the female line. Nowadays there is a strong opinion against this system and the descent from father to son is advocated by the educated few, and the proposed regulations in Cochin are attempts to make marriage binding and permanent and dissoluble only under certain circumstances, widows being still allowed to remarry.

[587] [595] With regard to all other Hindus, marriage before puberty prevails. But among the lower classes widow-marriage is allowable, money for a bridegroom is not demanded, and even polyandry is prevalent among certain sections of the Tiyyas. But only brothers can share a wife. A brother can marry his widowed sister-in-law. *Divorce* is allowed in cases of serious infidelity but divorced men and women can marry again.

562 *The purdah system* is followed by the Nambudri women alone in Malabar. They cannot see men. Whenever they come out they hold a big native kind of umbrella to hide their faces and come to the temple, etc. The ideas about the purdah system among them are changing nowadays and the abandonment of the system is hoped for in a few years. The Nambudris are also advocating changes in their marriage customs.

428 The property of a Nambudri or Nayar family cannot be divided among the family sons. The eldest has the right to manage the property and enjoy the profits. The other members of the family have a right for maintenance only. When the eldest dies the next to him in age comes to the position. Inthe case of a Nambudri